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221430Z Jul 05

ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CA-00	CIAE-00	COME-00
	INL-00	DODE-00	DS-00	EB-00	E-00	UTED-00	VC-00
	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	DCP-00
	NSAE-00	OES-00	OMB-00	NIMA-00	EPAU-00	PA-00	PER-00
	GIWI-00	SGAC-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	EVR-00
	FMP-00	R-00	EPAE-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W				

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2277

INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ETRD](#) [US](#) [BC](#) [SAN](#) [CKGR](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALLS WITH BOTSWANA

PRESIDENT AND VP HIGHLIGHT BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: (A) GABORONE 738 AND PREVIOUS (B) GABORONE 1002

AND PREVIOUS

1. (SBU) Summary. In his farewell calls with Botswana's President Festus Mogae and Vice President Seretse Khama Ian Khama July 21, Ambassador Huggins highlighted promoting Botswana business and human rights, specifically the Kenneth Good and Basarwa issues. The President and VP thanked the Ambassador for having deepened and broadened US-Botswana relations. Ambassador urged Mogae and Khama to work aggressively to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), saying Botswana could not just rely on its positive reputation. Khama hoped the new Government-Business Council would redynamize Botswana's FDI efforts. The Ambassador said Botswana must plan now for downstream projects that would follow the development of the coal bed methane project, which the USG has supported through TDA and OPIC funding. He also highlighted for Khama the Botswana Export Development Investment Authority (BEDIA)-Disney agreement to promote Botswana at Disney World during the September-November time frame. On human rights, the Ambassador told President Mogae and VP Khama that both the Ken Good (Ref A) and Basarwa (Ref B) cases depicted Botswana in a negative light, although the court cases showed the rule of law was observed. Mogae said his government would await the outcomes, while Khama defended the GOB action on Good, saying his criticism had grown more insulting and was not constructive. President Mogae faulted Survival International for telling lies about the Basarwa issue and diamonds. Both Mogae and Khama agreed that a San cultural project might result in great economic benefit for Basarwa living in the relocation villages. End summary.

US-Botswana Relations

2. (U) President Mogae thanked Ambassador Huggins for having broadened and deepened US-Botswana relations in both government and non-government circles. He singled out in particular the Ambassador's promotion of government-private sector partnerships with those working on HIV-AIDS. He also expressed thanks that members of the U.S. Congress had visited Botswana and that the country was now much better known in Congressional circles.

Promoting Business

3. (U) The Ambassador told Mogae and Khama that he hoped Botswana would take advantage of the U.S. private sector initiatives as it would benefit the country in its economic diversification program. He also encouraged both leaders to be more active in developing a

strategy to attract FDI. Khama, taking up the business theme, hoped that Botswana's public service had improved since his last meeting with the Ambassador but admitted that more progress was yet to be made. Khama attributed the economic downturn to devaluation of the U.S. dollar (which affects Botswana's diamond revenues), drought, and HIV/AIDS but said Botswana was working hard to attract FDI and learn from successful models.

14. (U) The Ambassador highlighted for Khama the coal bed methane project which the U.S. supported through TDA and OPIC funding. To exploit this new resource fully, he said, Botswana must start thinking now about how to use the gas in developing downstream projects. Such opportunities include selling the gas as liquified natural gas, exporting excess gas to the region and beyond, using it locally as a power source for homes and industries, and utilization of the enormous byproduct of water for industrial waste water processing or irrigation. He noted that an Israeli operation with a farming project in northern Botswana had already contacted the group developing the coal bed methane about using the water.

15. (U) The Ambassador also flagged the BEDIA agreement with Disney World to exhibit at the Food and Wine Show in September-November 2005 as a great initiative to promote

Botswana both in the U.S. and internationally. This initiative could benefit Botswana's efforts to generate revenue through increased tourism.

The Kenneth Good Case

15. (SBU) Ambassador Huggins raised the Kenneth Good and Basarwa cases with both the President and Vice-President, saying that both cases showed Botswana in a bad light. While the two cases were still in court, the deportation of Professor Good (Ref A) had raised his profile. Constructive criticism should be encouraged in a democracy as freedom of speech is one of the major pillars in a democratic state, said the Ambassador. He also commented that he did not perceive Kenneth Good as a threat to Botswana. If government had evidence to that effect, it should release into the public domain to better explain its position.

16. (SBU) VP Khama reacted defensively, saying the U.S. and Britain have come up with ways to deal with terrorism that might be eroding democracy. Assuring safety of citizens without eroding democracy is always a challenge. He further hinted that outsiders became interested only when the subjects were white, calling it a "color thing." He then cited the Mariana Bortch case of a white South African who was hanged for murdering her lover in Botswana. The VP went on to state, "We have deported Africans in the past and heard nothing from the West. We have hanged Africans in the past and heard nothing from the West. Why is that the West is only interested in cases that involve white people?"

17. (SBU) Khama further expounded that Kenneth Good had been criticizing the government for years but that his criticism had grown more "insulting." It was no longer constructive, said the VP. Kenneth Good had gone "overboard," writing in papers outside Botswana that portrayed the country in a negative light. Khama had "no regrets" about what had happened to Professor Good, saying he would be "forgotten over a period time." Both President Mogae and VP Khama said they would await the results of Good's Appeal before speaking further.

The Basarwa Case

18. (SBU) On the Basarwa case (Ref B), the Ambassador suggested that Botswana seek middle ground on settlements since only the elderly seemed interested in returning to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). President Mogae seized on Survival International's (SI) insistence that the Basarwa case was about diamonds. The President concluded that perhaps SI was doing Botswana a favor by "telling lies." That way, ex-critics were learning that diamonds were an "add-on" to SI's campaign for the Basarwa. He added

that any suggestion that the Basarwa wanted to return to ancestors' gravesites was SI fiction, since as nomads, the Basarwa never stayed in one place. He said the GOB would do a better job in explaining its position.

19. (SBU) VP Khama focused on the environmental issue, saying the returning Basarwa had brought livestock such as cattle, sheep, donkeys, and horses that led to wildlife decline and degraded the environment. He faulted SI as inciting the Basarwa to flout the law. The VP said he had reflected on possible solutions that would, as Ambassador Huggins suggested, give the Basarwa economic opportunities, such as a cultural village. The Ambassador noted that he had visited the settlements and that the Basarwa could not easily earn a living when villages such as New Xade and Kaudwane were so far from the main road. Khama suggested that a cultural village in the park might work. The Ambassador told Mogae and Khama the U.S. was ready to assist the Basarwa set up a

cultural village.

Comment

110. (SBU) Both meetings were very cordial, exemplifying our excellent relations. The Ambassador also discussed with the Vice President the latter's eventual succession to the presidency (septel).
HUGGINS

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